

**Shayla:** Why does Jesus misquote Isaiah 61:1-2 in Luke 4:18-21?

- **Isaiah 61:1-2 HCSB** The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to the prisoners; (2) to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of our God's vengeance; to comfort all who mourn,
- **Luke 4:18-19 HCSB** **The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, (19) to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.**

### **Midrash:**

If you compare the two passages side by side you'll notice one thing added and one thing removed. Jesus added "and recovery of sight to the blind" and removed "and the day of our God's vengeance."

Luke tells us,

- **Luke 4:16-17 HCSB** He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. As usual, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. (17) The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to Him, and unrolling the scroll, He found the place where it was written:

We're not really given the option of saying that Jesus was roughly paraphrasing because He actually took the scroll and turned to the passage, implying that he read it. When he quit, he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down (v. 20). Of course He could have turned to it and then simply looked up and spoke from memory. I'm sure He had most, if not all, of the Scriptures memorized at this point in His life.

However, if we say that, there are two problems. One is that we are making an unnatural assumption. Jesus took the book, opened to the right page and then didn't read it? That doesn't seem right.

Second, we'd be saying that Jesus' memory did not stand up to the test and He misquoted the Scriptures! I'd not be very comfortable assuming that about the One who actually brought them to us in the first place on Mount Sinai, who (through the Holy Spirit or through direct visionary intervention) dictated them to the prophets, and who had just finished winning a major spiritual battle with the devil himself by quoting Scripture repeatedly!<sup>1</sup>

So what's the deal? Some people like to argue over such issues as whether the Masoretic text or the Septuagint (LXX) is the superior early translation. In this particular case, Jesus' quote compares favorably to the Septuagint. Also, as most Jews of His day did, Jesus divided the Old Covenant into three sections: the Torah (law or instructions), the Nevi'im (prophets), and the Ketuvim (the "writings" including the Psalms).

- **Luke 24:44 HCSB** Then He told them, "**These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you--that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.**"

A lot of the passages among the Dead Sea Scrolls, especially those that are in Aramaic, follow the Septuagint more closely than they do the Masoretic text, though the differences are minor and meaningless in regards to the formulation of doctrine. Finally, most of the early Church used the Septuagint as their principle Old Covenant text. The ante-Nicene fathers defended their devotion to the Septuagint by citing its antiquity and its use by the earlier evangelists and Apostles.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 4:1-13

Some would use these points to argue that the Bible that Jesus read was the LXX since that's how the LXX is divided. However, He and the apostles also often broke it into two major sections: the law and the prophets.<sup>2</sup>

There were times when Jesus seemed to be quoting from the Masoretic Text.

- Mark 4:26-29 cp Joel 4:13
- Matthew 11:29 cp Jeremiah 6:16
- Mark 13:8 cp Isaiah 19:2
- Luke 16:15 cp Proverbs 16:5
- Mark 14:24 cp Isaiah 53:12

There were other times when He seemed to prefer the Aramaic Targum.

- Mark 4:12 cp Isaiah 6:9-10
- Matthew 26:52 cp Isaiah 50:11
- Mark 9:47-48 cp Isaiah 66:24
- Luke 6:36 cp Leviticus 22:28

Our doctrine states that it is the "autographa," the original texts that are inspired by the Holy Spirit, not the subsequent translations, paraphrases, interpretations, and versions. Contrary to their modern disciples, who believe them to be as inspired as the Apostles, the good men who translated the King James said in section 14 of their preface,

*"For to whomever was it imputed for a fault (by such as were wise) to go over that which he had done, and to amend it where he saw cause?"*

*"Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one...but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one..."*

*"Neither did we think much to consult the Translators or Commentators, Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek or Latin, no nor the Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch; neither did we disdain to revise that which we had done, and to bring back to the anvil that which we had hammered: but having and using as great helps as were needful, and fearing no reproach for slowness, nor coveting praise for expedition, we have at length, through the good hand of the Lord upon us, brought the work to that pass that you see."*

They did not claim infallibility and humbly encouraged others to examine and perfect their work as they examined and perfected the work of others.

What is my point? Regardless of their great antiquity, neither the Septuagint nor the Masoretic text are the autographa. They are subject to error. My belief is that the original author being God, when Jesus reads in or reads out certain portions, it is HIS version that is correct. I believe that Jesus was reading out of the Septuagint but was correcting it on the fly. This idea leads me to a very interesting study that I would like to undertake someday. I would like to go through and compare the way Jesus and the Apostles adjusted the Old Covenant readings and determine how the original text SHOULD read thereby.

This answer fits both the doctrine of the infallibility of the original text and the infallibility of the Master while remaining true to the way it was recorded in the Gospel. I am, therefore, convinced of its truth.

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 5:17; 11:13; Luke 16:16; John 1:45; Acts 13:15; 24:14